

## Deer-Vehicle Crashes in North Carolina and the United States - A Profile

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Deer -Motor Vehicle Crashes – A Costly Mix White-tailed deer can be seen on the move around North Carolina roadways at any time of year. In October, November and December deer are restless and agitated because their mating and migration seasons occur at this time.<sup>4</sup> Fall hunting season puts these agile creatures even more on the alert, making them likely to move suddenly, and to roam beyond their normal territory. These factors combine to increase the number of deer-vehicle crashes during these months. This report summarizes the results of recent national research and gives a picture of the North Carolina experience. Studies cited in the reference section of this report, and at the DeerCrash.com web site provide details.

The National Perspective According to the General Estimates System of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in the year 2000, there were approximately 247,000 reported crashes that involved a motor vehicle hitting an animal on the roadway.<sup>1</sup> It is believed that many crashes with deer go unreported.

Of these crashes, 86.9 percent involved a collision with a deer.<sup>1</sup> Using the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System - All Injury Program, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that in the years 2001-2002, there were 26,647 persons in the United States who received nonfatal injuries in animal related crashes and were treated in hospital emergency departments.<sup>2</sup> Annually in the U.S., estimates from NHTSA indicate that approximately 200 human deaths result from crashes involving animals.<sup>3</sup>

Costs associated with Damage to Vehicles Property damage from deer vehicle crashes (DVC) is considerable. A 1995 study<sup>4</sup> estimated that the annual vehicle damage cost for DVC is \$1.2 billion in the United States.

Effects on Deer Populations Along with the terrific toll to humans, it is estimated that in the United States, at least 1.5 million deer are killed each year in motor vehicle crashes. Many others are injured and maimed.<sup>5</sup>

What Is Being Done To Address The Problem? One of the most important ways to reduce the number of deer vehicle crashes is for drivers to be prepared to drive defensively when there is a possibility of an encounter with a deer.<sup>6</sup> See *Tips for Lowering Your Risk of a Crash with a Deer*.